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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

February 1993
Vol. 46 No. 6



University of Illinois
Graduate School of Library and Information Science

University of Illinois Press

"A fine melding of text and art."

—*School Library Journal*

SAINT VALENTINE

Retold and illustrated in full color by

Robert Sabuda

★"Stunning mosaics crafted from marbled and hand-painted paper depict this legend of Valentine, a humble Roman physician and 'priest of the Christians' whose patients include a jailer's blind daughter....The marbled paper creates subtle textures and shading, while vertical illustrations exude drama and compassion." —*Starred, Publishers Weekly*

"[Sabuda's] beautiful picture book warrants a close look, and it should bring the legend of Saint Valentine to a wide readership." —*Booklist*

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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

February 1993
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| | |
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| * | Asterisks denote books of special distinction. |
| R | Recommended. |
| Ad | Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area. |
| M | Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase. |
| NR | Not recommended. |
| SpC | Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections. |
| SpR | A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it. |

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THE BIG PICTURE

Marvin Redpost: Why Pick on Me?

written by Louis Sachar; illustrated by Neal Hughes

Easy-readers are too often watered down where they should be pared down, apparently unable to tell a vivid story in simple language; books about grade-school trauma are frequently cute instead of funny, patting the trivially troubled youngsters indulgently on the head while winking past them to adults. Louis Sachar, a consistently talented writer of books for grade-school readers, has circumvented these pitfalls to produce a tour de force of the genre, a trim tome of energy, hilarity, and wisdom. About nose-picking.

Don't let the subject of—er—digital nasal hygiene put you off; this is a trenchant and truthful look at grade-school social relations. Third-grader Marvin, hero of *Marvin Redpost: Kidnapped at Birth?* (BCCB 10/92), suffers a popularity plummet when the cheating class bully labels him a nose-picker after losing to Marvin in a playground game. Marvin's undeserved bad rep spreads as his former friends refuse to associate with him and even his teacher believes the rumors. Marvin's original response is ineffective ("The more you say you don't pick your nose, the more everyone thinks you do!"), but his brilliant solution is to use his class survey project to ask people if they've ever picked their noses: under the constraint of truthfulness, everyone—including Marvin's family, his teacher, and the *school principal*—everyone but the obviously lying bully admits having picked his or her nose.

Aside from being resoundingly funny, Sachar has a rare honesty about what children really encounter in the world, and how unhelpful adults can be. When Mr. Redpost (generally a better and more original parent than this) says about the defection of Marvin's buddies, "Well, if that's how they feel, then they're not really your friends," Marvin justifiably snaps back, "Great. I have no friends." Marvin's older brother Jacob tells of a classmate, mercilessly teased by all including Jacob, who finally moved away to what one hopes were better times. Sachar knows that the kid who comes home saying "Everybody hates me" may be right and may be doomed. "The kids usually weren't mean to him when they were alone. It was only when they were in a group," the narration states matter-of-factly, summing up in a few words the bitter anthropological truth that has reduced Marvin's social life to playing with his four-year-old-sister—when she doesn't have friends over.

Sachar keeps his kids honest too—Marvin, in the privacy of his room and without really thinking about it, does actually insert finger into nostril—but doesn't leave them completely adrift. Mr. and Mrs. Redpost put parenting before self-image and tell their son the truth: they, like everyone, have picked their noses.

"Sometimes a tissue just won't get it," explains Mrs. Redpost. "You blow and you blow, but nothing comes out." And Mr. McCabe, the school principal, wins prizes for modesty as well as heroism: he never actually appears in the book, but he's the first faculty member to come clean in Marvin's survey (Marvin's fundamentally decent teacher, Mrs. North, owns up after a brief struggle with her teacherly dignity), which provides a splendid punch line for chapter nine.

Aside from being a terrific book, *Why Pick on Me?* has some appealing extra qualities: it's available in paperback at a kid-affordable price, it's a book about a boy that boys will read (Sachar's always a good bet for those), and the cover and title are allusive but not specific, and all the funnier once you know. Although it's not a gross-out book, it'll lure readers of those without upsetting more delicate constitutions. All manner of readers (adult, too—if you've got the nerve, you could read it aloud) will laugh. Marvin's plight is distant enough to be safe for guffaws but close enough to be real, always a good (and difficult) comedic tight-rope to walk. Leave this one lying prominently around; kids may fear they'll suffer Marvin's fate if they ask for the book, but it will be an underground classic, an easy reader that kids are dying to read.

Deborah Stevenson, Assistant Editor



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ALCOCK, VIVIEN *Singer to the Sea God*. Delacorte, 1993 [208p]

ISBN 0-385-30866-3 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

R* Gr. 6-9

With confidently sustained imagination, Alcock develops the story of a young slave, Phaidon, whose sister is turned to stone when she serves wine at the banquet where Perseus confronts King Polydectes with the head of Medusa. Phaidon flees the palace with several other slaves who bond into a family during their survival on a deserted island and their dangerous voyage to the Greek mainland, where Phaidon fulfills a prophecy that he will sing a queen back to health. Phaidon's quest to bury the marble statue of his sister, whom no magic can restore, melds with his love for a wild girl who claims to have been found in a bear's cave and raised by a pirate (his own parents had been killed by pirates). Ancient Greek culture—both its majesty and its cruelty—blooms in Alcock's vivid prose, where action is underscored by descriptions such as that of the "dark red poppies scattered in the bleached grass like a hero's blood." This convincing mix of myth, realism, adventure, and character study turns good literature into a good read—and a good read-aloud. BH

ALEXANDER, SALLY HOBART *Mom's Best Friend*; illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Macmillan, 1992 48p

ISBN 0-02-700393-0 \$14.95

R Gr. 2-4

As she did in *Mom Can't See Me* (BCCB 11/90), Sally Alexander writes from her

daughter's point of view; here it's to tell the story of Mom's acquisition of a new guide dog after the death of old Marit, who was loved by the entire family. The book depicts Mom learning to work with Ursula at guide-dog school (dog guides aren't, as a friend of Leslie's thinks, "little machines that zoomed blind people around"); the family handling the household in Mom's absence; and, after Mom's return home, the integration of the new canine member into the family ("Like magic," says Leslie, "I was crazy about this shrimpy new dog"). This book focuses more on the guide dog's work with her final owner than do Caroline Arnold's *A Guide Dog Puppy Grows Up* (BCCB 3/91) and Elizabeth Simpson Smith's *A Guide Dog Goes to School* (BCCB 1/88). The dog-training scenes touch on problems such as trash collection day ("Every twenty feet there's a garbage can reeking of pizza, hoagies, old cheese") that sighted readers won't have contemplated. Photographs are clear and informative, picturing everyday life for both sighted and blind persons as they go about the business of dog- and housework, and Alexander's lively prose on an appealing subject will keep young readers absorbed. DS

ARNOLD, TEDD *Green Wilma*; written and illus. by Tedd Arnold. Dial, 1993 32p

Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1314-2 \$13.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1313-4 \$13.99

Ad 5-8 yrs

"One morning Wilma woke up green, and much to her surprise/ She sat up on her bed and croaked and started eating flies," begins this cheerfully silly, rhymed story about a transformation. Froggy Wilma, clearly gleeful at her amphibian state, splashes through school, encouraging a copy-cat trend (kids splatter green paint on each other) and tongue-zapping at flies; she finally chases her quarry to a pond, where she falls in, barely escapes a fish—and wakes up. Unfortunately the confusing ending may bewilder both adults and kids—it seems likeliest that Green Wilma's whole day is the dream of a young frogette, but neither text nor pictures preclude the many other waking/dreaming frog/human scenarios that might be behind this adventure. Bug-eyed Wilma is adorable, however, with rich verdant skin, flyaway hair, a little button nose, and the loudest wardrobe permitted by law; the pencil and watercolor art is absurd and action-packed, milking the slapstick for its considerable worth as Wilma sits excitedly atop the bus driver or bounces off of lunch-room-workers' heads. It's a pity about the feeble finish, because otherwise this is a lively school-havoc read-aloud likely to keep the tadpoles entertained. DS

AUCH, MARY JANE *Out of Step*. Holiday House, 1992 124p

ISBN 0-8234-0985-6 \$13.95

R Gr. 5-7

Jeremy is twelve the summer his widowed father remarries, bringing Jeremy and his little brother a new stepsister named Allie. Allie is exactly Jeremy's age, and the two kids get signed up for the same soccer team. Much to the family's pride, Allie soon becomes the star of the team—but one of the few times Jeremy gets to play, he's crunched by a much bigger member of the opposing team and then throws up on the referee's Nikes. Having had enough of Allie's success, Jeremy throws himself into competition with his stepsister for his father's attention. Jeremy's pain is real and described in subtle ways throughout the story—"Dad stood there watching Allison, bursting with pride. I never saw him look like that over anything I did. As he sat back down, Dad glanced over at me, but he turned away as if he didn't know who I was." The momentum and sensitivity of the story are main-

tained through the last chapter, when Jeremy and Dad finally communicate about the isolating pain each felt when Jeremy's mother died. Apparently it will be a while before they can discuss the more recent hurt they've caused each other since the addition of their stepfamily. This is a compelling story, with a complex and authentic protagonist. KJ

BOICE, TARA *If You Find a Baby Bird: How To Protect and Care for Wild Baby Birds*; illus. by Marjorie Sagar and Ernest C. Simmons. Seawind Publishing, 1992 36p (Educational Ecology)

Paper ed. ISBN 0-9631916-0-8 \$7.95

R Gr. 3-5

"Stop! Before you pick up that tiny bundle, wait a moment." Reliable natural history books start with a respect for wild animals' needs, and Boice explains why most fledglings should be left alone and how nestlings can be relocated for their parents to care for. In case of the necessity for rescue, Boice also makes it clear that taming is the wrong tack, that warmth is a necessity, and that feeding is a constant (up to every ten minutes during the day). In general, the how-tos are well presented, though there's a serious question as to whether the instructions about locating the pigeon's crop "on the right side of the throat" means the bird's right side or the right side when the child faces the bird, as shown in the illustration (squirt-ing the food down the trachea will choke it). Other directions and all formulas are specifically clear, as are descriptions of the various common species pictured in the pen-and-ink drawings, which are stiff but accurate. BH

BRESNICK-PERRY, ROSLYN *Leaving for America*; illus. by Mira Reisberg. Children's Book Press, 1992 32p

ISBN 0-89239-105-7 \$13.95

R 6-9 yrs

Like Winter's *Klara's Journey* and Leighton's *An Ellis Island Christmas* (both BCCB 9/92), this is a story of a little girl's emigration from her European homeland to America. Bresnick-Perry's book is autobiographical, though, and is devoted to the departure from her Russian shtetl home rather than to the arrival in America. Imminent departure brings a wealth of farewells and shared memories, such as the time the narrator was conned by her "best and worst friend" Zisl into taking off her dress and painting the outhouse: "I got a good spanking for that adventure." Friends teach the girl's mother the essentials of English: "You say 'yes' for *yo*, 'no' for *neyn* and 'okay' for everything else." Reisberg's folksy paintings bordered with homey details enhance the scrapbook flavor of the story, which is finely focused and has the poignancy of memory without the haze of nostalgia. The author's afterword, which states that Zisl, along with many of the author's relatives left behind in Russia, was killed in the Holocaust, is a sobering footnote to the legend of America's "Golden Door." RS

CASELEY, JUDITH *My Father, the Nutcase*. Knopf, 1992 185p

Library ed. ISBN 0-679-93394-8 \$15.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-679-83394-3 \$15.00

R Gr. 7-12

Like the author's first young adult novel, *Kisses* (BCCB 5/90), this has a prickly, strong-minded protagonist who is trying to sort out the kind of sexuality she wants from the kind she doesn't and who is meanwhile caught up in a family crisis—her father's nearly catatonic depression. Caseley's strength is characterization, and fif-

teen-year-old Zoe Cohen's friends and family are developed with precision, consistency, and nuance. The structure of the book typifies the structure of a teenager's life, revolving around episodes in school, encounters at home, and anticipation of (and repercussions from) dates. The only dramatic action is her father's sudden recovery through shock treatments, which may be realistic but leaves one wondering how an increasingly desperate Zoe would have coped without this happy ending (she also gets the right boyfriend, after an authentically slow and steady growth of understanding). The voices here, which strike a natural balance between individualistic and quintessential, will speak directly to readers, especially adolescent girls, who will hear themselves thinking throughout the book. BH

CERVANTES, MIGUEL DE *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza*; ad. by Margaret Hodges; illus. by Stephen Marchesi. Scribner's, 1992 72p
ISBN 0-684-19235-7 \$16.95 R Gr. 4-7

Marchesi's mix of full-color and black-and-white illustrations on canvas offer a vigorous blend of action and bittersweet portraiture that will go far in helping contemporary students relate to a classic text (in abridged form). Six chapters capture famous incidents from Cervantes' novel: the innkeeper's knighting of Don Quixote; the proverbial tilting of windmills; the unfinished story Sancho tells to keep Don Quixote from rushing into danger at night; the episode where the blindfolded knight and squire are tricked into riding a wooden horse, which they think is flying through the air; Sancho's brief governing of a village he believes to be an island; and Don Quixote's death. Hodges' introduction may not prepare young readers for the pathetic-to-bitter range of humor that her adaptation has captured so well, as both main characters get mercilessly beaten, thumped, and victimized despite their good hearts and harmless intentions. Inevitably, the account sometimes becomes summary, but the last three chapters, especially, reach a depth of detail that is close enough in spirit to the original to exert considerable power. Better a sensible selection of Cervantes than none at all. BH

CHOCOLATE, DEBORAH M. NEWTON *My First Kwanzaa Book*; illus. by Cal Massey. Cartwheel/Scholastic, 1992 25p
ISBN 0-590-45762-4 \$10.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

For younger children than Porter's *Kwanzaa* (BCCB 12/91), this is a pleasant introduction to the holiday, as a young boy describes his family's Kwanzaa activities: dressing in African clothes, hanging a red, black, and green flag, lighting the Kwanzaa candles, enjoying the visits and gifts from relatives, and just generally appreciating the holiday family atmosphere. Like many Christmas and Hanukkah books, this is more a catalog than a story, but holiday picture books are always popular, and this one has the advantage of valuable appended pages that, for parents and older children, explain the holiday's history, activities, and symbols. Massey's paintings are boldly and neatly drawn, but the characters display a monotonous vacuity of expression and sometimes seem posed. RS

CLARKE, J. *Riffraff*. Holt, 1992 106p
ISBN 0-8050-1774-7 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 4-6

Sophia Throstle is not your average child, nor would she wish to be: "she liked her stiff, spiky, orange hair, which stuck out in all directions, and she even liked the

big brown freckles she had over her face, really huge ones, as large as ten-cent coins." She also likes her forthright personality: "She made remarks about people's hair and clothes and faces and the way they walked and spoke—and most of all she *talked*, on and on and on in her loud, rackety voice." Then she meets shy, middle-aged writer Theodore Snackle, with whom she develops an odd companionship, and he suggests she could make a friend of Sam Froggett, a lonely boy with considerable drawing talent in Sophia's class. Sophia is at first skeptical, but after some help from Theodore and his stories she and Sam finally embark on friendship. Unfortunately the pace of the book skids to a halt with the inclusion of two fifteen-page stories by Theodore that, for all their metaphorical relevance, lack the appeal of Sophia and Sam's story. Sophia's complete absence of superego makes her an endearing and wish-fulfilling heroine reminiscent of Pippi Longstocking and Matilda, and it's rather a shame that she seems to be developing some social sensitivity toward the end; her friendship with Sam is less interestingly outrageous than her original nature would suggest. It's still a funny story, with the wild and slangy humor Clarke displayed in the Al Capsella books (BCCB 7/90), and readers who enjoyed those—or have a taste for wild heroines—will find Sophia worth knowing. DS

CONOVER, CHRIS *Sam Panda and the Thunder Dragon*; written and illus. by Chris Conover. Farrar, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-374-36393-5 \$16.00

Ad 5-8 yrs

When "the rackety rain machine that rolls across the sky stopped stone-cold" Thunder Dragon comes down to earth to find a way to get it going again. What he finds, however, is Sam Panda, who, in packing to leave his drought-stricken orchard for the city, unwittingly sews Thunder Dragon up in his coat. Sam frees Thunder Dragon, who promises to grant him three wishes (and immediately forgets in his quest for fame and fortune), but finally Sam fixes the rain machine and returns home, apparently blessed by Thunder Dragon with good fortune for the rest of his life. There's a nice folk-like tale at the heart of all this, but it's elaborately presented and confusing: the segues from one plot-point to another depend on illustrative elucidation that is not always forthcoming. The pictures and blocks of text on most of the pages are framed by delicate and somber landscapes, both rural and urban, in rainy colors; these in themselves are detail-filled and absorbing, but they make the pages visually cluttered. Conover's multi-specied cast, especially the non-humans, have real charm in their precise lines and gentle wash colors. Despite the overall lack of cohesion, kids will enjoy the high points, such as the hunt-the-details possibilities in the busy urban scenes and the jokes about Thunder Dragon's meteoric rise to stardom (newspapers featuring his latest exploits float across the pages), in this Chinese-flavored version of the old genie story. A board game that has little to do with the plot inexplicably appears on the endpapers. DS

COOPER, KAY *Why Do You Speak as You Do?: A Guide to World Languages*; illus. by Brandon Kruse. Walker, 1992 66p
Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8165-9 \$14.85
Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8164-0 \$13.95

M Gr. 4-7

Addressing the origin of language itself, language families, dialects and accents, and borrowings, Cooper attempts to give an overview of the "system of vocal

sounds you use to communicate to people." She moves from language in general to the history of English and its dialects, then devotes one chapter to hints on learning another language and two more to brief descriptions of other world languages a reader might encounter. Unfortunately, her descriptions are sketchy and confusing and her examples are inane and unclear ("Do you go to *skOOuuuhk*? You call western Texas home"; or "When you hear the sound *eye* in English, you think right away of two round objects that allow you to see"). Statistics invoked never differentiate between native and non-native speakers of a language (when Cooper says that in India "5 percent of the people speak English" does she mean as their native tongue?). Important language terms such as "creole," "pidgin," and "dialect" aren't well explained, which is particularly unfortunate as they begin to seem like linguistic merit rankings. Some informational statements are doubtful as well ("In English, only one adjective has had two forms—*blonde* and *blond*," when other French borrowings have had similar variants). It's a pity, because there's a wealth of fascination in language, at which we get occasional glimpses here (for a good examination of our language, its history, and its borrowings, see Janet Klausner's *Talk about English*, BCCB 1/91). A glossary and index is included, but there are no source notes or bibliography; slickly droll black-and-white art appears periodically. DS

DAVOL, MARGUERITE W. *The Heart of the Wood*; illus. by Sheila Hamanaka. Simon, 1992 34p
ISBN 0-671-74778-9 \$14.00

R 3-7 yrs

What makes this picture book successful is the merging of a subject—singing and dancing—with a style that sings and dances. Echoing the cumulative cadence of the old nursery rhyme, "This Is the House That Jack Built," the text builds on more lyrical rhythms: "This is the tree, the sycamore tree, that grows in the Winderly Woods./ This is the mockingbird perched in the tree that grows in the Winderly Woods./ This is the song, so wild and free, sung by the mockingbird perched in the tree that grows in the Winderly Woods." From woodcutter ("sunburned and lean"), ax ("sharpened and keen"), tree ("toppled and still"), and sawmill ("noisy and shrill"), to woodcarver, fiddle, fiddler, and music, the poem reels in a pace well partnered by the jubilantly swirling, autumn-radiant paintings. Bark paper has absorbed the artist's brush strokes and softened the glare of the reds and oranges without diminishing their hue, resulting in impressionistic contrast that heightens the effect of movements from slow to fast to slow again. The magic cycle of wood turned music makes a rich theme, and the characters—an Asian woodcutter, a black woodcarver, a white fiddler—make a subtly blended cast against the golden browns and deep browns dominating the scenes. Where truth and beauty meet, children will tap their feet. BH

DOYLE, DEBRA *Knight's Wyrd*; by Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald. Yolen/Harcourt, 1992 209p
ISBN 0-15-200764-4 \$16.95

R Gr. 7-10

Eighteen-year-old Sir Will Odosson seems to have everything a young knight would want: a position with Duke Anlac, loyal companions, a beautiful betrothed, and regular success at tournaments. Things are too good to last, however. On the night before he is sworn into the Duke's service, Will learns his "wyrd" (fate) from the wizard, Master Finn: "You can take up the sword and be Sir William Odosson

all your life long—but you'll meet death before any other title comes to you." True to his heroic nature, Will doesn't use caution to stay out of danger and avoid his wyrd; he even seems to seek it out. When his loyal companions and his fighting prowess are the only weapons he has left, Will and his friends go after a mad, man-eating ogre. Folkloric elements with a Celtic flavor appear throughout the story, especially when Will has a mystical journey through a magically time-locked world while he searches for the ogre's life, which has been well-hidden far away from his body in an egg. The folklore is woven well into the story, but some of the plot devices are less effective. For example, the political reasons Will loses the duke's favor are contrived, and Will's loyal companions don't have individual personalities but come across as faceless drinking/fighting buddies. On the other hand, there are distinct surprises: when Will finally does meet Lord Death, it is not how he imagined it would be. Will's wyrd foreshadows a bloody sequel when Lord Death promises "you and I ride close together, Will Odosson; the ogre will not be the last to look on you and see my face." KJ

ENDE, MICHAEL *The Night of Wishes, or the Satanarchaeolidealcoholish Notion Potion*; tr. from the German by Heike Schwarzbauer and Rick Takvorian; illus. by Regina Kehn. Farrar, 1992 218p
ISBN 0-374-19594-3 \$16.00

Ad Gr. 7-10

This whimsical fantasy takes place within a seven-hour period, enumerated in 10 to 20-minute intervals throughout the story. Time is up for Beelzebub Preposteror, the Shadow Sorcery Minister, who has made a deal with "His Hellish Excellency . . . the Minister of Pitch Darkness Himself." In exchange for "extraordinary powers," Beelzebub is expected to wreak environmental chaos on the earth, destroying animals, rivers, trees, climate, and humans—and he has not met his quota for the year. It is New Year's Eve, and Beelzebub has to do some serious damage before midnight or the devil will foreclose on his soul. Into the scenario enter Beelzebub's eccentric Aunt Tyrannia Vampirella and their familiars, a cat and a raven. While the threat of environmental destruction is truly evil, the use of the two familiars as spies for the High Council of Animals is a bit cloying and contrived. Ende's cleverness sometimes goes too far, with the name ("Satanarchaeolidealcoholish") and contents of a potion, and again when he mentions his more famous title *The Neverending Story*, in a short list of library books. His wordplay, when noticeable, is usually funny, but while the malevolence holds the story together, the whimsy almost dissolves it. KJ

FENNIMORE, FLORA *The Art of the Handmade Book: Designing, Decorating, and Binding One-of-a-Kind Books*. Chicago Review Press, 1992 99p illus. and with photographs

Paper ed. ISBN 1-55652-146-4 \$11.95

Ad Gr. 7 up

For students and artists interested in producing handmade books, this gives a lot of useful advice. Although the text begins with a short history of books, most of it is devoted to simple bookmaking techniques. The author shows how to make a variety of books out of common materials such as cardboard, butcher paper and glue, and includes many binding methods, including soft cover and soft spine, hard cover and hard spine, binding with signatures, and scroll books. Unfortunately, an effort to be thorough results in redundancy, so that the beginning steps

of binding and covering are repeated in each section, several times in a single chapter. Most of the directions are clear enough to follow, but the section on making pop-up books is confusing. For example, the phrase "Cut a slit 1/4 inch wide and 1 1/4 inch deep" should say "Cut *two* slits 1/4 inch long and 1 1/4 inches apart." (The discrepancy can be cleared up by examining the accompanying drawings.) In most cases, the many simple line drawings are useful in defining further the written steps, but the few photographs are amateurish and taken from odd perspectives, so that readers will feel they aren't quite seeing everything that's there, and the presence of the unusual black-and-white prints scattered throughout the book isn't explained until the last chapter. Overall, though, this book gives the novice bookmaker a sound background from which to springboard into more creative projects. KJ

FORMAN, JAMES D. *Becca's Story*. Scribner's, 1992 180p
ISBN 0-684-19332-9 \$14.95

Ad Gr. 7-10

Based on letters and a diary kept by one of the author's ancestors from 1859 to 1866, this is the story of a girl whose two suitors volunteer for Michigan's Seventh Regiment to fight during the Civil War. Where Forman develops the complex dynamics among the three young people, who have grown up together in a small town and who sustain a genuine affection for one another, the book comes alive. Becca's resentment over losing her true love at Gettysburg overshadows any sense of what he died for, but she consoles herself with a second-best love who survives two terrible wounds and who, from the sound of things, is a more promising candidate for a steady life together. Unfortunately, the informational properties of the primary sources and background material often seem at war with the plot, as when the main characters' experiences of a battle or home situation are interrupted by generalized descriptions of the war's progress, slowing the pace considerably, or when random events drop suddenly into and out of the main narrative. We hear in one sentence that Becca has seen Tom Thumb, and in the next that General Burnside has moved his grumbling army south; neither situation is fictionally realized, and such incidents are multiplied to the point of becoming distracting facts. Despite the problematic focus, however, the characters' own words (in the form of quoted passages) are often vivid and reveal a firsthand glimpse of ordinary people caught up in forces beyond their control or understanding. BH

GABLER, MIRKO *The Alphabet Soup*; written and illus. by Mirko Gabler. Holt, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-8050-2049-7 \$14.95

R Gr. 2-4

Assigned by their teacher to make a bowl of alphabet soup, monster twins Gurgla and Blog, along with their witch-mother, get right down to work: ants, bagworm, crunchy crabs, dandruff . . . "How about an EARWIG!" suggested their mother. A whole flock of earwigs lived between her toes, and *splash!* into the pot they went." Unfortunately, a curious humanoid schoolmate, Zach, has followed the twins home, and it takes him all of twenty-five letters to discover the final ingredient. He survives but is basically beside the point in any case: what kids will love about this book is the disgusting catalog of soup mixings, and happy cries of *eeewwww* will punctuate your story hour. Impulsively scrawled crayon-and-wash illustrations have a gleeful flair; the family is a manic, fast-moving, greenfaced trio; slurps and splashes and stinky gases percolate across the pages. RS

GEISERT, ARTHUR *Pigs from 1 to 10*; written and illus. by Arthur Geisert. Houghton, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-395-58519-8 \$14.95 R Gr. 1-3

Geisert's inventive pigs are at it again (see *Pigs from A to Z*, BCCB 2/87), here building a bridge to, well, a "lost place with huge stone configurations." Why? Who knows? In any case, the story is simply a contrivance to link the artist's double-spread etchings of tiny, diligent piglets so absorbed in their project that they don't notice all the little numbers, zero through nine, hidden in the crabbed, gloomy landscapes that fill each picture. As with *A to Z*, readers will have to look sharp for the numbers craftily lined into clouds, cliffs and the baroque machinery these pigs are so fond of; other numbers are left casually lying around where anyone might stumble over them. The tone and texture of the book are a little too sophisticated and monochromatic for those in actual need of a counting book, but older kids will enjoy the hunt—and the bonus game of finding each of the ten pigs in every picture. RS

GOLDBERG, WHOOPI *Alice*; illus. by John Rocco. Bantam, 1992 48p
ISBN 0-553-08990-0 \$15.00 M Gr. 2-4

While this *Alice* has a white rabbit, a mad hatter, and a couple of seriously scary queens, it's hardly the Lewis Carroll story followed more closely in Sheppard's *Aliji in Dreamland*, reviewed below. Interestingly, and perhaps tellingly, Goldberg's Alice parts company from her nineteenth-century predecessor not because of her urban hipness (though there's plenty of that) but because of her earnest didacticism. Alice figures that money will buy her anything she wants. With the help of her faithful friends Salvador the invisible rabbit ("who sounded a lot like that actor Robert De Niro"—how cute) and top-hatted Robin, Alice learns what Judy Garland's Dorothy could have told her all along (and probably did): "Everything she really wanted had been with her the whole time." We've learned that preaching is part of the package when celebrities write for kids; at least Goldberg is a smoother stylist than most. John Rocco's paintings are agreeably groovy and even more agreeably drawn; unfortunately, an excess of shadow and airbrush effects dims the wit of the linework. RS

GREEN, CONNIE JORDAN *Emmy*. McElderry, 1992 152p
ISBN 0-689-50556-6 \$13.95 R Gr. 6-9

Eleven-year-old Emmy and her large family live in a Kentucky coal mining town, where her Pa has recently lost an arm and injured a leg in a mining accident. While Pa lies depressed in the bedroom, Ma and the rest of the family make a living by feeding daily boarders. As the family's luck goes from bad to worse, Emmy, who is a middle child and feels the heavy responsibility of being the oldest girl, wishes she had her brother Everett's gift to make life exciting. A feeling of lost childhood permeates the story; both the children and Ma use up their emotional strength on Pa. Although the book focuses on Emmy, Pa's mood swings and outbursts make him the true central character, and his gradual good progress is believable. The family's poverty and mutual loyalty sometimes border on the melodramatic ("I ain't gonna let them take my son and do the same thing to him"), but the author maintains realism by giving the family some happiness without a trite ending. A good fit for the thoughtful, sophisticated reader. KJ

GRIFFIN, PENI R. *The Treasure Bird*. McElderry, 1992 136p
ISBN 0-689-50554-X \$13.95

R Gr. 4-6

When Jessy's stepmother inherits her great-uncle's old Texas farm, the whole family—ten-year-old Jessy, her older stepbrother Matt, and Jessy's father and stepmother—move down to San Antonio for the summer. The old man has also willed his talking parrot to Matt and some old samplers to Jessy, and the kids begin to think that the samplers and Goldie the parrot are providing clues to the location of an old family treasure. The treasure hunt, with Jessy, Matt, and Matt's new friend Curtis clambering along dry creekbeds and crawling into caves as they try to decode Goldie's cryptic utterances, takes on new importance as the pursued loot becomes the family's only hope of staying, as they want to, in San Antonio. Jessy is a credibly smart and stubborn child, whose speech problem ("She didn't care if anybody said *stuttered* instead of *speech impediment*. She was all for short words") weaves its way naturally into the story, and the relationship between her and her older stepbrother is a realistic mixture of kindness and irritation (the unlikely subplot about Jessy's commune-dwelling mother, however, is unnecessary). Griffin's Texas settings are always atmospheric, and young readers will enjoy the story of kids triumphantly puzzling out a mystery and saving the family fortunes. DS

HAAS, JESSIE *Skipping School*. Greenwillow, 1992 181p
ISBN 0-688-10179-8 \$14.00

R Gr. 7-10

Seeking to avoid the smothering attentions of relatives while nursing Dad through the last stages of emphysema, Philip's family has moved to a small town in rural Vermont, but it turns out that their new start brings only isolation. Philip's father, now permanently linked to an oxygen tank, watches TV and stares out the window; his mother, accustomed to busy days as a farm wife, compulsively cooks and does needlework. Philip, fifteen, finds distraction through his job at a local animal clinic (these scenes, funny and moving, are the best in the book), through soccer, and through his discovery of an abandoned house, where he brings two kittens rescued from euthanasia. This is an exploration of a situation rather than a story, but while the writing is occasionally pretentious, the family's loneliness—especially for each other—is a convincing and sad dilemma, well-cast against the gray landscape of a Vermont winter. RS

HALL, LYNN *Windsong*. Scribner's, 1992 73p
ISBN 0-684-19439-2 \$11.95

R Gr. 5-8

Marty's life is centered on the greyhound kennel where she spends her spare time on weekends and after school. Although she's only thirteen, Marty knows she wants to make a career of dog racing. When the kennel owner gives her a runt named Windsong, Marty's determination to keep the puppy pits her against her dysfunctional family. Her mother's secret affair with the local evangelist seems to Mary like an opportunity to break up the family and get away from her spoiled, dog-allergic brother. Marty resolves her ethical dilemma (whether or not to tell Dad about Mom's affair) with developing maturity and insight: "George wouldn't leave his wife and take up with Mom, and if he did, he'd just be unfaithful to her like he was being now to his wife." The emergence of Marty's character is believable and well-rounded within the story. Dog devotees will relate to Marty's passion for Windsong, and they'll get a good story in the bargain. KJ

HALLIBURTON, WARREN J. *Africa's Struggle for Independence*. Crestwood House, 1992 48p illus. with photographs (Africa Today)
ISBN 0-89686-679-3 \$13.95 M Gr. 5-8

A note on the contents page foreshadows some of the problems with this series entry: "The images in this book are meant to convey visually the spirit of the struggle for independence in Africa, and are therefore not captioned." That's empty rhetoric: how could captioning betray the cause? (The photos are identified in the back of the book.) Although Halliburton supplies an adequate summation of Africa's history—rather remarkable, given the book's brevity—the information is generalized and sometimes obscured by sentimental and sloppy writing. In describing the slave trade, for example, he says "the heart of the Africans was torn from them." He also neglects to mention the African complicity in the trade, but his assessment of problems in contemporary African states is evenhanded (although the book has little information on North African states). There are no notes or reading list; an index is appended, as is a frequently inaccurate and badly written glossary, which defines "subsistence crops," for example, as "crops that are used to support a small group, such as corn or potatoes." RS

HELFMAN, ELIZABETH *On Being Sarah*. Whitman, 1993 173p
ISBN 0-8075-6068-5 \$11.95 R Gr. 4-7

Sarah is twelve, with cerebral palsy so severe that her movement is confined to one arm and her communication must take place through a system of symbols affixed to her wheelchair. She's excited by the prospect of attending a regular school (in a special education class), eager to get out more, and afraid that her father, worried about her mother's exhaustion, will send her to an institution. Sarah's viewpoint is a mixture of maturity and innocence realistic in one who's seen so many of the pressures of life and so little of the world; the family members are more credibly drawn than in most medical drama books, with a loving yet jealous sister, an all-giving mother who depends on being needed by her daughter, and a father who never has—and probably never really will—come to terms with the daughter who isn't what he'd hoped for. Helfman, an expert on the Blissymbols system that Sarah uses to communicate, writes in a somewhat old-fashioned style but deals well with emotional subtleties. Sarah's small gains—making new friends, having a successful birthday party—are large enough in her world to give a narrative thrust to the book, and kids will find this story of someone who shares their desires—but not their ability to achieve them—involving. DS

HISER, CONSTANCE *Sixth-Grade Star*. Holiday House, 1992 117p
ISBN 0-8234-0967-8 \$13.95 Ad Gr. 4-6

Big and little sisters alike will enjoy this easy read about the intense rivalry between sixth-grader Jill and her nine-year-old sister Jessica. Jill thinks Jessica, a beauty-contest pro since babyhood, gets all their (widowed) mother's attention, and, basically, she's right: Mrs. Armstrong is hard put to display the same enthusiasm for Jill's landing the part of Auntie Em in the school production of *The Wizard of Oz* as she does for Jessica's run at the Little Miss Apple Blossom title. And Jessica herself can't resist some needling: "Big deal! That was your wonderful news? Excuse me if I don't faint." The fight scenes are well done, but they do get repetitive; the story rather too singlemindedly sticks to its theme of the sisters' need to

take better care of each other's feelings. After several crises, everything works out, and the story ends with Jessica and Mrs. Armstrong cheering for Jill's performance as—no surprises here—Dorothy, a classmate's father's job relocation having handily accomplished this unlikely but satisfying change of roles. RS

HOPKINS, LEE BENNETT, comp. *Through Our Eyes: Poems and Pictures about Growing Up*; illus. with photographs by Jeffrey Dunn. Little, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-316-19654-1 \$15.95 R Gr. 1-3

What's especially advantageous about this slim but energetic anthology of sixteen poems is its visual appeal, including attractive color photographs and large print set into plenty of uncrowded white space. The verses have room to breathe. Children are often turned off by the non-narrative format of poetry, but this picture book, with the surefire popularity of contributors such as Nikki Giovanni, Jack Prelutsky, Felice Holman, and David McCord, guarantees an audience. All the poems have appeared elsewhere, but Hopkins' own "City Blockades" exemplifies the grace, simplicity, and brevity that characterize them and make them worth repeating: "I feel so small/ standing beneath the tall/ buildings that wall/ me and the pigeons in/ from the light of the/ sky." Photographs of children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds are expressively composed and clearly reproduced; the faces here will reach out to readers even before the words do. BH

INGOGLIA, GINA *Sacajawea and the Journey to the Pacific: A Historical Novel*; illus. by Charlie Shaw. Disney, 1992 76p (American Frontier)
Library ed. ISBN 1-56282-263-2 \$12.89
Paper ed. ISBN 1-56282-262-4 \$2.95 M Gr. 4-6

Disney's American Frontier #7 is an account of Sacajawea's journey with Lewis and Clark from her home in North Dakota, where she is taken after the Hidatsa kidnap her from her Shoshone family in Montana and marry her off to a French trapper, Charbonneau. To the author's credit, there's no romanticizing of the Native American's relationship with either the leader of the expedition or with Charbonneau, portrayed as a boastful, excitable man whom Sacajawea accepts as part of her fate. Unfortunately, the style is wooden and full of anachronisms: "I really hate pine nut mush," complains Sacajawea's friend—the same one whom Sacajawea later asks, after years of separation, "Now tell me, Happy Song, what have *you* been doing while I was away?" The information may be well researched—we don't know, since there's no bibliography or specific distinctions made between fact and fiction in the endnote—but its incorporation into the dialogue is contrived: "Those rattles," says Charbonneau, after Sacajawea has been given ground snake rattles to aid her in childbirth. "They really did the trick!" The book turns Sacajawea's hardships into a personal vision quest, which may or may not have been likely but is believable in context of the story told here. Occasional pen-and-ink drawings are competently drawn, though there's a noticeable breakdown when the text says that Sacajawea's brother, a chief whom she's just thrown her arms around after long absence (would she display open affection on the formal occasion of a tribal leader's meeting with white men?), turns her around to look at her baby, who is not on her back in the picture. Biographies of and historical novels about this subject more or less abound; try Scott O'Dell's *Streams to the River, Rivers to the Sea* (BCCB 4/86). BH

JUSTER, NORTON *Alberic the Wise*; illus. by Leonard Baskin. Picture Book Studio, 1992 26p
ISBN 0-88708-243-2 \$16.95 M Gr. 4-6

Originally written in 1965 (according to the copyright date), this is the story of Alberic, a land-tied peasant whose imagination is fired by a traveler, so he sets upon a journey to find wonders. First he finds a stained-glass maker and apprentices himself to that trade, but he proves talentless; then he learns stonecutting with the same depressing result; then metalwork, pottery, weaving, and a host of other pursuits with no luck at all. When, as an old man, his stories of his fruitless journeying bring him a reputation for wisdom, he is puzzled and unhappy until he realizes that a) he needs to define himself and b) he needs "the freedom and joy of not knowing where each new step will take him." The story is in a highly literary and elaborate—and at times convoluted—style more suited to adults than to children, but the real problem is the plot itself. Alberic's wanderings, his stint as wise man, and his eventual departure don't seem to belong to the same story, particularly since the final epiphany is both ambiguous and banal. The illustrations are moody and impressive; they're somber and immediate watercolors with a luminosity that makes them seem like smudgy stained glass. The text is in forbidding full-page blocks (on an oversized page, to boot) with a slender typeface that makes the print look even smaller. For older kids interested in richly written fairy tales, there's better material ranging from Nancy Willard to Isak Dinesen. DS

KAPLOW, ROBERT *Alessandra in Between*. HarperCollins, 1992 [160p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023298-6 \$13.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023297-8 \$14.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 7-12

In this sequel to *Alessandra in Love* (BCCB 5/89), Alessandra juggles her passion for out-of-reach rock star Throb with her crush on the apparently just-as-out-of-reach junior class fair-haired boy Terrence. Meanwhile, the perfectly decent Barry keeps hoping for a date for himself with Alessandra. Melissa, Alessandra's best friend, is back with her own romantic dramas, and both girls are full of advice for each other: much of the book, in fact, consists of conversations between the two as recorded by Alessandra in her journal. Plot is not the strong suit here, but the lengthy repartee about who's going out with whom and why is made fresh and fun by Alessandra's inexhaustible supply of wit and sarcasm. Here, for example, are Alessandra's thoughts on love. "People certainly throw that word around. Poor word. It probably walks around with little crutches and a tiny cast on its arm. The other emotions sign the cast: 'Get well soon. But not too soon.—Envy.'" She does get Terrence in the end (*and* Throb: looks like another sequel), but readers will probably share the book's implicit assumption that Barry would have been the better choice. RS

KHERDIAN, DAVID, ad. *Feathers and Tails: Animal Fables from Around the World*; illus. by Nonny Hogrogian. Philomel, 1992 [96p]
ISBN 0-399-21876-9 \$19.95
Reviewed from galleys R 5-8 yrs

Kherdian has peppered this anthology with just enough unusual fables to make it a worthwhile purchase even for those libraries that have books containing the more

common tales ("Anansi Rides Tiger," "The Monkey and the Crocodile," "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids"). Most of the twenty-one selections are East European, African, Asian, and Native American. The term *fables* is a bit deceptive, since *pourquoi* tales, trickster tales, proverbs, and a riddle all find their way into the pot, but that's all to the good, since fables are often either serious or ironic; the tone here is varied with open humor, and the adaptation is elegantly low-key. Hogrogian's modulated colors and rounded animal figures are saved from soft handsomeness by an occasional sly edge in pose or expression. An endnote describes the fables' authors, where known, but does not cite sources for the folklore, which comprises about half the collection. BH

KISLING, LEE *The Fool's War*. HarperCollins, 1992 166p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020837-6 \$13.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020836-8 \$14.00

R* Gr. 5-8

In the tradition of Natalie Babbitt's *The Search for Delicious*, Kisling has written a well-crafted tale, set in the Middle Ages, about a rustic hero named Clemmy. After his father dies, fifteen-year-old Clemmy is left in charge of the prosperous family farm and his difficult old mother. Clemmy is a capable farmer, but he is not satisfied doing only that. He rescues the village idiot from his abusive father, asks a monk to teach him to read Latin, and eventually sets off with his little family to the city of Mulberia to serve Fernholz. Not only does Clemmy loyally help the king woo his Lady Libby, but he also bravely works to avert a war with "the Turk" (Suleiman the Magnificent) that King Fernholz hardly sees coming. The combination of magic, mixed-up miracles, and historical details brings a genuine medieval flavor to the tale, and the author's short, exact sentences give the story and its hero wisdom and nobility ("Will the boy be smarter or less clumsy after you've beaten him?" Clemmy asked). Subtle and not-so-subtle humor lighten the serious threat of war with the Turks—one of Clemmy's friends is tortured by the Turks by being tickled on the bottom of his feet with a feather, and a desperate prayer works backwards and turns all the Turks' swords into spoons and their horses into sheep. Adventure, humor, history, and magic give this book a multifaceted appeal. KJ

LASKY, KATHRYN *Surtsey: The Newest Place on Earth*; illus. with photographs by Christopher G. Knight. Hyperion, 1992 64p

Library ed. ISBN 1-56282-301-9 \$15.89

Trade ed. ISBN 1-56282-300-0 \$15.95

Ad Gr. 4-8

The (beautiful) cover and title page attributing the photographs to Knight are somewhat misleading; while he and Lasky did visit and photograph Surtsey, all the photos documenting Surtsey's eruption (half the photos in the book, including the cover) were taken by Sigurdur Thorarisson or Sigurgeir Jónasson, who are credited in small print on the copyright page. All the photos are *National Geographic* gorgeous: vast towers of volcanic ash rising out of the sea, a lava flow livid against the night, mats of sea sandwort grasping the black volcanic soil. Lasky's text is sometimes pedantic, but more often smooth and informative, sparked by the apt and occasional simile: "It was through the lava that the island was shaped and sculpted, that cliffs were formed and black beaches like magician's capes swept out to sea." Her explanations of the eruption and subsequent geological events of

the island are laced with strands of Norse stories, a poetic and intriguing synthesis that reveals the stubborn hold of both science and myth. What's missing here is a sense of personal engagement: while Lasky and Knight are two of only a hundred people who have visited Surtsey, they don't tell us what it's like to be there, and their account feels distanced and a bit cold. An index is appended. RS

LEVIN, BETTY *Mercy's Mill*. Greenwillow, 1992 241p
ISBN 0-688-11122-X \$14.00

Ad Gr. 5-9

Sarah is angry about her family's move to rural Massachusetts, where her mother and stepfather Roger are refurbishing an old mill as a tourist attraction. Sarah and Roger don't get along, and there's the added complication of Janey, a younger, troubled foster child. When she falls into the ice while exploring near the mill, Sarah is rescued by a teenaged boy who, it eventually is revealed, is a time traveler from the past, an escaped slave searching for *another* time traveler, Mercy, from colonial New England, who is being chased through time by an evil man. Mercy's story is told in interpolated italicized paragraphs, a confusing device, and Levin's opening chapters for this timeslip fantasy are somewhat convoluted: between the problematic relationships of Sarah's family and the intricacies of the time-travel itself (not to mention the ongoing construction of the mill and dam), there's a lot to sort out. However, time-fantasy fans tend to enjoy these kinds of machinations, and the real-life dynamics of Sarah's family make a strong contemporary matrix. The layering of three time periods is unusual, and after the initial settling in, the novel's suspense builds steadily and scarily, leading to a strong showdown that confounds wicked forces from both the past and the present. RS

LINDEN, ANN MARIE *One Smiling Grandma: A Caribbean Counting Book*; illus. by Lynne Russell. Dial, 1992 25p
ISBN 0-8037-1132-8 \$15.00

R 3-5 yrs

This visual invitation to visit the Caribbean also serves as a cozy read-aloud during which children can count the persons or objects spelled out in the text (unfortunately, numbers are not included). Starting with "one smiling grandma in a rocking chair" and ending with "ten sleepy mongooses," the rhyming couplets follow an Afro-Caribbean child through an idyllic day until she nods off in her grandmother's lap. The flashing colors and rounded shapes are as rhythmic as the sounds, and the large compositions will involve toddlers in both laps and large groups. There's no cumulative story effect, as there is in some counting books—*Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang, for instance—but the catalogue is an unusual one that can be voiced for either lulling or lively effects. BH

LIVINGSTON, MYRA COHN *Let Freedom Ring: A Ballad of Martin Luther King, Jr.*; illus. by Samuel Byrd. Holiday House, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-8234-0957-0 \$15.95

M 6-9 yrs

Livingston tries to pack information along with inspiration into this poetic tribute, which unfortunately opens with a misplaced modifier: "Born in Atlanta on Sunset Adams Street,/ Daddy taught him dignity. Daddy was a preacher." The poem is a series of sometimes clunky quatrains (that occasionally bog down in heptametric excess) punctuated with devotional couplets: "From every mountainside, let freedom ring./ Your road is our road, Martin Luther King." Often splicing together (and always boldfacing) quotes from King himself,

Livingston sometimes gives the impression that King preached in verse: "**Mine eyes have seen the glory** [not King to begin with, but never mind]/, **The sunlit path is there. Let us not stay and wallow/ In the valley of despair.**" Those quotes are from three different speeches. As well, Byrd's paintings seem an uneasy mix of reality and artistic interpretation, sometimes looking like copies of photographs but with occasional awkwardness in the drawing. Together text and pictures are heartfelt, even adulatory, but Marzollo and Pinkney's *Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King*, reviewed below, will communicate itself more readily to children. RS

LONDON, JONATHAN *The Owl Who Became the Moon*; illus. by Ted Rand. Dutton, 1993 32p
ISBN 0-525-45054-8 \$13.99 R 3-5 yrs

It's hard to resist a night journey, and here's an alluring one: a "ride on a train/ through a forest/ in the dark/ under the stars/ when the only sound is the sound of the train/ CHOO-CHOOOO/ except for an owl/ WHOO-WHOOOO." With the train whistle and the owl call punctuating the rhythmic text, the train climbs through a snow-covered forest, over bridges across icy streams, and past animals awake and asleep. While the language sometimes substitutes imagery for sense—it's not clear, for instance, what is meant by the owl becoming the moon—the skillful repetition of sounds, dreamy feel, and train setting make this a hypnotic read-aloud for little ones. The art, mixed-media but primarily watercolor, keeps mainly to a luminous palette of black, white, and cobalt; the illustrations of the inky locomotive, silvery puffs of steam (no diesel, this train), and star-studded night skies keep the nocturnal tone of the words while evoking a frosty open-air atmosphere of their own. Both adventurous and lulling, this is a bedtime story that should strike a particular chord with kids who also view nighttime as a horizon to cross. DS

MCGREGOR, MERIDETH *Cowgirl*; written and illus. with photographs by Merideth McGregor. Walker, 1992 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8171-3 \$15.85
Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8170-5 \$14.95 R Gr. 1-3

A young girl named Casey describes her life with her parents on a Texas ranch. Mom and Dad are equal partners on the ranch, and Casey works right beside them, starting at 5:30 a.m. Readers will learn about planting, harvesting, making hay, and tending horses and cattle. The last third of the book upholds the promise of the title and shows Casey preparing to barrel race in a rodeo. The full-color photographs are bright and crisp; unfortunately, the book design is a little intrusive, with yellow-parchment text-blocks distracting from the pictures. In general, however, this is a realistic, informative overview of life on a ranch. KJ

McKENNA, COLLEEN O'SHAUGHNESSY *The Brightest Light*. Scholastic, 1992 191p
ISBN 0-590-45347-5 \$13.95 R* Gr. 7-12

Kitty Lee's sixteenth summer is fraught with confusion, what with her old friend Cody asking her to the movies, her father's depression, and her best friend Dottie wrapped up in a mysterious romance: "Dottie, on a real date? With a twenty-five-year-old man nobody in town even knew? I shivered then, spooked. Just when you think you know someone like a book, they go and add another chapter." And

Kitty Lee herself is adding a few pages, as she spends the summer babysitting the kids of an attractive older man and his sad, alcoholic wife. Both tone and topic are something new for author McKenna, best known for her likeable Collette Murphy series for younger readers. Written with an easy Southern swing reminiscent of Bobbie Ann Mason, McKenna's portrait of a clear-headed yet vulnerable West Virginia teenager has subtle strength: Kitty's narration is wholly her own, with the aims of the author completely subsumed in the protagonist's authentic voice. Teen-aged girls will enjoy Kitty's sexy—but innocent—moments with Mr. Curtis; even more, they will love Kitty's first kiss with Cody. The "girl's book" sometimes seems to have been abandoned as old-hat by young adult fiction, but McKenna here proves the resilience of the genre with a story that is steadily told, entirely contemporary, and deeply romantic. RS

MACLEAN, JOHN *When the Mountain Sings*. Houghton, 1992 168p
ISBN 0-395-59917-2 \$14.95 R Gr. 5-8

Sam, thirteen, enjoys skiing but in no way feels ready for competitive racing. "I'm not nervous." I push my eggs toward the back of my plate. "I just don't want to race. I mean eat." In this formulaic but likable story, Sam becomes a better and better skier, gets a spot in the tri-state championships after his best friend breaks his leg, does quite well, and wins a special trophy as the best thirteen-year-old in the race. There's lots of ski talk and action, most of which will be clear to those who don't know the sport. The frosty Berkshire setting and the cozy atmosphere of Sam's family (an older brother and a mother with a great sense of humor) are both artlessly evoked. Although Sam's teammates *cum* competitors are not characterized to any distinguishing degree, the races are suspenseful and Sam, a vulnerable but determined participant, is easy to cheer for. RS

MADO, MICHIO *The Animals: Selected Poems*; tr. from the Japanese by the Empress Michiko of Japan; illus. by Mitsumasa Anno. McElderry, 1992 48p
ISBN 0-689-50574-4 \$16.95 R Gr. 4-7

Twenty poems by one of Japan's foremost writers for children (Mado was nominated by the Japanese section of IBBY for the 1990 Hans Christian Andersen Award) find a graceful new home in this dual-language book illustrated with taupe papercut decorations by Anno. The pictures become repetitious, since the same design appears across the bottom of each double spread, but they provide an elegant setting for the text. The poems, in Japanese on the verso and in English on the recto, are brief and singularly delicate. A good example is "Zebra": "In a cage/ Of his/ Own making." The tone varies, however, with glints of humor, as in "A Dog Walk," which suggests tying a bell on each of four legs ("ChiRin/ KoRon/ KaRan/ PoRon") to see "Which leg/ Comes after which." Empress Michiko is an accomplished translator; the book will complement the Japanese studies that increasingly find their way into today's school curricula and will make a fresh contrast to the traditional haiku so often represented in western anthologies. BH

MARKO, KATHERINE MCGLADE *Hang Out the Flag*. Macmillan, 1992 160p
ISBN 0-02-762320-3 \$13.95 Ad Gr. 4-6

In this World War II story, Leslie, age eleven, is trying to think of the perfect

welcome-home present for her father, who has been completing boot camp for the Seabees. Her surprise, a huge American flag painted onto a water tower, has a patriotic flair, and the tone here in general is more nostalgic than is usual in today's historical fiction about the era. Take, for example, Leslie and a friend's spying on an old German neighbor: in any other book the kids would learn that the neighbor is just another neighbor, but in this one he's revealed to be a genuine Nazi spy. "'Whoever called the police,' Mama said, 'did us all a favor.'" (The informant was Leslie.) The book rather too singlemindedly hews to its time and place, with the narrative threads seeming mainly an excuse to talk about rationing, shortages, victory gardens and scrap drives. Still, the easy reading and plethora of homey details would make this a good first step up from the *American Girls* series and other formulaic historical fiction. RS

MARZOLLO, JEAN *Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King*; illus. by J. Brian Pinkney. Scholastic, 1993 [32p]

ISBN 0-590-44065-9 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-9 yrs

As simple and direct as the Livingston book reviewed above is obscure and convoluted, this very easy biography of Martin Luther King is distinguished by its succinct explanations of King's achievements: "Once there was a law in some places that said that black children and white children couldn't go to school together. Martin Luther King and other people, including many very brave children, had this law changed, too. Now black children and white children can go to school together." Occasionally, there's a tone of talking down to children ("His dream was that people everywhere would learn to live together without being mean to one another") but the narrative of King's life is smooth and accessible. Pinkney's scratchboard paintings are fluidly drawn, warm, and dignified, the restless lines of the scratchboarding animating and humanizing what could have been (and is, in Livingston's book) a daunting canonization. RS

MERRIAM, EVE *The Singing Green: New and Selected Poems for All Seasons*; illus. by Kathleen Collins Howell. Morrow, 1992 102p

ISBN 0-688-11025-8 \$14.00

Ad Gr. 4-6

This is a puzzling collection to assess, since it's hard to determine the ratio of new poems to "selected" poems already published in books that may be out of print but still circulating on library shelves (no prior titles are acknowledged). "Rainbow Writing," for instance, is memorable from the 1976 book of that title, but "A Vote for Vanilla," also an old favorite, is harder to track down. Of the two mentioned on the jacket as being new—"Grump" and "Gift Wrapping"—both are rather prosaic compared to Merriam's wittier writing, much of which has been anthologized elsewhere. On the other hand, this cross section does give a strong sense of the poet's playful sound effects and word juggling. Sometimes both elements are exaggerated to the point of gimmickry, but more often they're clever: "Ah oneday come moonday/ come chooseday come whensday/ my hersday my freeday/ my satyrday SUN!" The black-and-white drawings are decorative if not particularly inventive. Libraries without the late poet's previous works will find enthusiasts for this one. BH

MICKLETHWAIT, LUCY *I Spy: An Alphabet In Art*. Greenwillow, 1992 57p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-688-11679-5 \$19.00 R Gr. 1-4

A series of twenty-six paintings offers parents and teachers the opportunity to expand the game of I Spy with some close observation of fine art, which has been selected from a range of classic and modern work with an eye for what children will find intriguing. *A* is easy: the green apple smack in the face of Magritte's *Son of Man* will start things off with a chuckle; and Win Hockney's *A Bigger Splash* is a snap. For *G*, however, kids may have a harder time finding the guinea pigs in Kessel's *Still Life with Fruit and Flowers*; and the ink well in Botticelli's *Madonna of the Magnificat*, the key in Steen's *The World Upside Down*, and the yacht in Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (sort of cheating, since those are really small sailboats) will present a challenge. I personally did not find the turtles in Savery's *The Animals Entering Noah's Ark*, but I found a turkey, so that's okay. The contrasts here are apparent from the examples: the elephants in an Indian piece (*Workmen Building the Palace of Fatehpur Sikri*) come the page before Picasso's *Sitting Woman with a Fish Hat*, but since each letter has a double spread of its own—text facing picture—there's no jarring discontinuity. The book is expensive, but the art is well reproduced, spaciouly set, and rewarding to look at; the age range is broad; and the book's usefulness makes it durable. Searching for hidden clues is a great way to introduce masterpieces and get kids to look at them carefully, and this could well launch an imaginative game in the museum. BH

MONSON, A. M. *The Deer Stand*. Lothrop, 1992 171p
ISBN 0-688-11057-6 \$14.00 R Gr. 5-8

Thirteen-year-old Bits is miserable when her family moves from Chicago to rural Wisconsin. The kids in her small school are reluctant to accept a newcomer, especially one with three earrings in one ear. Her best friend in Chicago seems already to have forgotten about her, and lonely Bits starts taking after-school walks in the woods around her home and is thrilled to see her first deer. After much perseverance, Bits manages not only to tame the deer so that it eats out of her hand, but also to make a friend at school. She is surprised to learn about deer hunting season from her new friend and to realize that she has been taming her deer around a deer stand—a kind of tree house where the hunters hide from their prey. Bits works desperately to draw her pet away from the stand and into a pen she makes to keep him safe during the hunting season. The one-track devotion Bits has for the deer is believable in a thirteen-year-old, and her friendships, romance, and enmities develop as tenuously as in real life. Although the situation occasionally reaches melodramatic proportions, Monson avoids a traditional happy ending in favor of a realistic one. KJ

MOORE, LILIAN, comp. *Sunflakes: Poems for Children*; illus. by Jan Ormerod. Clarion, 1992 96p
ISBN 0-395-58833-2 \$18.95 R* 4-8 yrs

A varied assortment of seventy-six poems bursting with sound and sense, these will appeal to young children because of their lively tone and their visual setting in Ormerod's spacious, gracious pictures. A good example is the brooding-blue double spread with a black cat whose eyes reflect the only white spots on the page; here are

clustered three winter poems—"Grandpa Bear's Lullaby" (Jane Yolen), "At Night" (Aileen Fisher), and "Snow in the East" (Eve Merriam). By contrast, the next double spread features a light wash on white, with "Magic Story for Falling Asleep" by Nancy Willard and "Waking" by Lilian Moore, whose several contributions to the anthology are among its best. That's saying a lot, since her consistent selection suggests an ear perfectly tuned to lyrical nuance, on the one hand, and children's sensibilities, on the other. There aren't any surprise contributors here, for those included are tried and true, but there are plenty of surprises of language and art, including the mock-fierce door-knocker illustrating Patricia Hubbell's "Granny." The organization flows organically; the poems seem to group themselves naturally into sections on bugs, rain, food, etc., each titled with a quote and none seeming contrived. Aesthetically and poetically, this will serve as a family or classroom staple. BH

PATENT, DOROTHY HINSHAW *Nutrition: What's in the Food We Eat*; illus. with photographs by William Muñoz. Holiday House, 1992 40p
ISBN 0-8234-0968-6 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 3-5

A no-nonsense text illustrated by full-color photographs explains the function of food in generating energy, specifying the roles of carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals. In one case the simplification becomes confusing, when a brief passage about fat causing cholesterol appears above a group picture of fatty foods including margarine labeled "no cholesterol." Otherwise the information is clear. The level of the text puts this in reach of primary-grade reports (glossary and index included), the recipe for soft pretzels will reinforce the idea of healthy snacks, the food guide pyramid will update those old circular charts, and the examples of calorie/fat content will serve as a warning contrast of the differences between ice cream and frozen yogurt, French fries and baked potatoes, etc. There's nothing new here, and the design is stodgy, but the synthesis is well packaged for a basic introduction. BH

PAULSEN, GARY *Nightjohn*. Delacorte, 1993 [80p]
ISBN 0-385-30838-8 \$14.00 R* Gr. 7 up

Nightjohn is an African-American hero, a slave who escapes and comes back at the risk of torture and death to teach his people to read. The narrator is twelve-year-old Sarny, slated by her cruel plantation owner to become a breeder like her mother, who was sold off long before. But as Sarny waits with apprehension for "the trouble"—the first menstruation period that will seal her fate—she sneaks into the last days of her childhood an effort to learn how to read from John, who gets two of his toes cut off for teaching her. The greatest change is not in the narrator or John, who both remain steadfast in their determination to pursue reading, but in Delie, the slave who raises the babies born to breeders and who is stripped, harnessed to a buggy, and whipped when she won't tell who has been teaching Sarny. Delie, who had once prohibited John from teaching Sarny, now expresses her admiration for him as he escapes again and establishes an underground (literally and figuratively) school. Paulsen is at his best here: the writing is stark and bareboned, without stylistic pretensions of any kind. The narrator's voice is strong and true, the violence real but stylized with an almost mythic tone. In fact, these are characters of folkloric dimension, idealized in their sheer determination to survive, or, in the case of the oppressor, villainous in devilish proportion. Because the

story unfolds with the compression of a legend, these figures seem more archetypal than stereotypical, and the simplicity of the text will make the book ideal for older reluctant readers who can handle violence but can't or won't handle fancy writing in long books. Best of all, the metaphor of reading as an act of freedom speaks for itself through striking action unembroidered by didactic messages. BH

PIERCE, TAMORA *Wild Magic: The Immortals*. Karl/Atheneum, 1992 260p
ISBN 0-689-31761-1 \$16.95 R Gr. 7-12

Thirteen-year-old Daine has a knack with animals that her new employer, Onua, finds exceptional. As Daine and Onua travel across country with a pack of ponies, Daine's unusual talents for communication with and healing of animals seem to stem from rare wild magic. Unaware of the power of her gifts, Daine feels awed when she meets Onua's surrogate family, including Alanna the Lioness, Numair the Mage, King Jonathan, and Queen Thayet (some of the main characters in the author's *Song of the Lioness* quartet). In this book, Pierce, McCaffrey-style, has taken her imagined community of wizards and female warriors into the first book of a new series within the same setting. Pierce demonstrates her mastery of fantasy conventions by presenting several larger-than-life-but-humble characters and a kingdom-threatening crisis of cataclysmic proportions. Not only are Daine's powers necessary to save everyone's skins, but she is also a worthy and refreshing addition to a familiar cast. KJ

PRATHER, RAY *Fish & Bones*. HarperCollins, 1992 257p
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-025122-0 \$13.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-025121-2 \$14.00 R Gr. 7-10

A midday bank robbery starts this flamboyant YA novel set in the small, swampy Florida town Sun City; the town is just as much a character as are any of the story's human characters, a high-profile, mostly African-American group with names such as Fish, Bones, Toad Man, Long Mose, and the local white bully, Skip. Bones tells the story, and his narration is attentive if occasionally long-winded. Marked bills from the robbery keep popping up in the most unlikely pockets (embarrassing citizens both saintly and scurrilous) and Bones, along with old Toad Man, is determined to collect the thousand-dollar reward for capture of the thief. Bones is also determined to win the annual Sun City Regional Rattlesnake Rodeo, and his race to capture the longest snake before his chief competitor Skip finds one first gives the book some further focusing suspense. The tone is Southern comic-grotesque, the characters are distinctly drawn, and while there is really too much going on in the story, there's an underlying strand of myth (with particular echoes of "Big Sixteen") that gives depth to the comedy. RS

ROSENBERG, MAXINE B. *Living with a Single Parent*. Bradbury, 1992 113p illus. with photos
ISBN 0-02-777915-7 \$14.95 R Gr. 5-7

One aspect that distinguishes this book from the others that are conscientiously included in its bibliography (one listing for children, one for adults) is the emphasis on sibling relationships. Rosenberg has interviewed all the children in some of the families, which reveals several things: how living with a single parent can affect individuals differently, depending on temperament, gender, and age; how sisters

and brothers form different dependence patterns with each other in the absence of a second parent; and how a family can stay bonded despite financial and emotional stress. Only-children "speak up" too, as well as two children who live with their lesbian mother and her two gay friends. The seventeen children interviewed and pictured here (the black-and-white photos are small and informal) are not all satisfied with their situations, but they are generally coping well and are honest about what they've been through ("I felt that anyone who had a dad was better than me"), including, in many cases, embarrassment over telling peers about having only one parent, despite the fact that 21% of U.S. children live in single-parent households. Inasmuch as kids can be convinced to pick up self-help books, this one offers the friendly company, varied in ethnic background, that they may need so badly. BH

ROSENTHAL, PAUL *Where on Earth?: A Geografunny Guide to the Globe*; illus. by Marc Rosenthal. Knopf, 1992 106p
Library ed. ISBN 0-679-90833-1 \$15.99
Paper ed. ISBN 0-679-80833-7 \$11.00 R Gr. 4-8

After a general introduction to the planet ("The International Date Line is *not* a telephone number you call to hire an escort for the school dance"), this book makes fun of each continent in turn, dispensing some remarkably cogent information amidst the sometimes stupid, but often pointed, jokes: "Empires are like umpires. Both tell others what to do." The humor in the many well-drawn, full-color cartoon illustrations is better-sustained than in the text: "the dense forest" has trees that say "duh"; Mississippi is a strange creature with four eyes, four "esses", and two pees. *Annoying* and *adolescent* are just a couple of words adults may use to describe this oversized paperback introduction to geographical literacy, but facts about names, places, dates, flora, and fauna are accurate, and so are the maps. The book has an open and sophisticated design that encourages browsing; like *Where's Waldo* but with a brain, it's the kind of thing that's useful for study-hall miscreants, a shut-up-and-read book that actually has a chance for success. RS

SACHAR, LOUIS *Marvin Redpost: Why Pick on Me?*; illus. by Neal Hughes. Random House, 1993 [80p] (First Stepping Stone Books)
Library ed. ISBN 0-679-91947-3 \$9.99
Paper ed. ISBN 0-679-81947-9 \$2.99
Reviewed from galleys R* Gr. 2-4

See this month's Big Picture for review.

SAVIN, MARCIA *The Moon Bridge*. Scholastic, 1992 232p
ISBN 0-590-45873-6 \$13.95 R Gr. 5-7

Ruthie's in fifth grade and Pearl Harbor has just been bombed; on the San Francisco homefront, a Japanese-American classmate, Mitzi Fujimoto, suffers taunts and threats. Ruthie befriends Mitzi (at the expense of another friendship) and their bond grows until Mitzi and her family are suddenly interned with the rest of the local Japanese-American population. The two friends write at first but lose touch when Mitzi's family is moved to an out-of-state camp; Ruthie continues to write—but not to mail—occasional letters to her friend until the war's end, when Mitzi returns to San Francisco and the long-separated friends are reunited. The

mild new-friends story makes a surprisingly effective backdrop for the more troubling account of everyday people dividing into the haters and the hated. The reunion at the end is telling: after four years of adolescence, the girls have so physically and emotionally changed that they hardly recognize each other, and for Mitzi those four years are lost time. The characterization isn't deep but it has some realistic turns, with a beloved teacher spitting poison about "the Japs" and grade-school torment becoming sinister. Readers not up to Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* may find this more mundane fictional account easier going and still emotionally involving. A historical note about the internments is appended. DS

SCHWARTZ, ALVIN, comp. and ad. *Stories To Tell a Cat*; illus. by Catherine Huerta. HarperCollins, 1992 72p

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020851-1 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020850-3 \$15.00

Ad Gr. 2-5

Schwartz has adapted twelve short stories and two poems from folklore about cats, which Huerta illustrates with competently drawn pencil and wash drawings in black and white. Some of the selections are familiar, as in "The Cat Came Back" and "The King of Cats"; "The Make-Believe Cats," about a boy whose drawings come alive, is an Americanized version of a well-known Japanese folktale with the same motif. "The Ship's Cat" and others are more unusual, but overall, the retellings are uneven. While "The Green Chicken" ("It's *nota* green chicken," thinks the cat about a talking parrot. "It's a green *person!*") is tightly written and funny, "Rosie and Arthur" (about a bad dream) is anticlimactic, and "The Nest" (a variant of "Belling the Tiger") is meandering. Nevertheless, Schwartz has an easy-to-read style and the book's format will invite cat-lovers to browse through and pick out their favorites. The author's notes are, as always, informal and helpful; only the first title in the bibliography is annotated. BH

SHEPPARD, NANCY, ad. and tr. *Alitji in Dreamland/Alitjinya Ngura Tjukurmankuntjala*; illus. by Donna Leslie. Ten Speed Press, 1992 105p

ISBN 0-89815-478-2 \$16.95

Ad Gr. 4 up

Unlike Whoopi Goldberg's *Alice*, reviewed above, Sheppard's book is a close adaptation of Lewis Carroll's story. That is, the events of the narrative are the same, but both cast and setting have been given an Australian aboriginal translation (as has the text, with English and Pitjantjatjara versions running side by side). It's an interesting novelty, with the White Rabbit becoming a White Kangaroo, the Caterpillar a Witchety Grub, and the Mad Hatter a Stockman, but the book and the conceit inevitably go on for too long, lacking the fusion of language and story that makes the original so original. For its cultural tidbits, though, and for the illustrator's often striking deployment of aboriginal motifs in the paintings, the book might make an offbeat contribution to both literature and social studies classes. RS

SIERRA, JUDY, ad. *The Elephant's Wrestling Match*; illus. by Brian Pinkney. Lodestar, 1992 32p

ISBN 0-525-67366-0 \$14.00

R* 3-7 yrs

"One, two, three, four"—stamping his feet with a mighty roar, the elephant challenges all the animals to a wrestling match, with monkey relaying the message far and wide on his talking drum. Leopard loses quickly, crocodile rolls over and

is stroked to sleep, rhinoceros falls beneath elephant. But bat, rattling and buzzing in elephant's ear, brings the giant pachyderm to the ground, whereupon monkey drums a message of victory and elephant smashes the drum ("That is why, nowadays, / You don't see monkeys playing the talking drum"). Sierra's adaptation of the Bulu tale, which her note says was collected in Cameroon and published in a 1914 volume of the *Journal of American Folklore*, has been skillfully shaped for a picture book audience, who can focus on the escalating repetition of events as they occur and echo on the monkey's drum. The drama is simple enough for toddlers to follow but sturdy enough to hold older kids' attention as well. Brian Pinkney's scratchboard drawings avoid over-elaboration, contrasting the huge elephant with a tree diminished by distance in the first double spread, and throughout keeping the figures monumental in size and monochromatic in hue against a wide blue sky. The scope of the book, both story and art, will suit a broad range of read-aloud groups. BH

SINGER, MARILYN *California Demon*. Hyperion, 1992 149p

Library ed. ISBN 1-56282-299-3 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 1-56282-298-5 \$14.95

R Gr. 5-7

In a world where magic lies close to the surface of everyday life, Rosie Rivera accidentally lets a demon (more properly, "*impus mischievous*") out of a bottle where it has been safely trapped since 1928. The demon disappears by climbing into the purchases of a customer of the Riveras' Vermont magic shop and reappears again in California, having been shipped with the presents to the customer's children. Danny, twelve, and his sister Laura, ten, think the imp is a genie who will obey their every command. The demon pretends to be submissive, for a while, but soon his inherent evil nature takes over. The fulfillment of Danny and Laura's wishes takes on a sinister side they don't intend, and soon they realize that the demon was never under their control, but instead they are helplessly under his. Rosie and her mom, Lydia, feel responsible for releasing the demon, so they track him down. The final confrontation takes place on a California mountainside, with Rosie and Lydia's witchcraft matched against the imp's powers. Although the plot has many elements similar to Mahy's *The Changeover* (the book is even mentioned as Rosie's favorite), Rosie's initiation as a witch does not seem as desperate, nor do Danny and Laura seem to be in as much mortal danger as do Mahy's characters. The demon, with his wild hair and electric blue eyes, is a comical bad guy, especially when he is scolded by his mother, The Queen of the Genies, Ammomgib ("Big momma" spelled backwards). The humor keeps the story buoyant, magic gives it sparkle. KJ

SMITH, ROLAND *Inside the Zoo Nursery*; illus. with photographs by William Muñoz. Cobblehill, 1993 64p

ISBN 0-525-65084-9 \$15.00

R Gr. 3-7

Starting with (and periodically returning to) the story of a baby baboon who requires human intervention when she becomes the object of a dangerous primate custody battle, this book explains the role of a zoo nursery, which raises baby animals when their parents can't or won't. The book describes feeding practices (complete with exotic brand names such as Monkey Chow™), the important avoidance of imprinting on humans so that animals will still identify with their own species (note the photo of the condor chick being fed by a condor puppet), and the

reintegration of an animal with its own kind; there's also a chapter comprising zoo-baby anecdotes about various successfully raised pups, kits, cubs, and chicks. Stressed throughout is the fact that "the best zoo nursery is an empty one," that it's always better for animals to be raised by their own species, and that while baby animals can be enchanting, raising them is not for amateurs. This is a clear and competent look at a field-trip subject, and both the zoologically inclined and the simply baby-loving will appreciate a behind-the-scenes encounter. Photographs of various babies suckling and playing are both informative and appealing (although not always relevantly placed); an index is included. DS

SPIER, PETER *Peter Spier's Circus!*; written and illus. by Peter Spier. Doubleday, 1992 46p

ISBN 0-385-41969-4 \$16.00

Ad Gr. K-2

Spier here turns his hand to that most child-appealing of events: a circus. He depicts the caravan's arrival at the grounds, the creation of the "circus village" and the Big Top, and the various human and animal components of circus work ("This is where the Laszlos live. They are Hungarian jugglers from Budapest. Mr. Uzelli from Naples, Italy, is one of the clowns. His wife sells tickets"). After the preparation the performance takes place, with clowns, acrobats, animal acts, and everything else a fully-stocked circus would possess; then the audience leaves, the place gets cleaned up, and the circus is gone again. The square oversized pages are filled with packed and detailed line-and-watercolor pictures of circus life; when combined with a six-picture per page composition, as it sometimes is, the detail can be overwhelming, particularly as there's not much variation in the line-driven, people-packed compositions (when a contrasting illustration appears, such as the predominantly blue, sky-gazing picture of the trapeze artists, it really stands out). Circuses are crowded places, however, and a one-on-one booksharing may produce some pleasurable hunts for interesting extras such as the unicyclists or the bison. The act-by-act account sometimes seems catalogued, but the frenetic life of the international cast is well captured, and kids will enjoy getting a chance to examine at leisure a spectacular that in real life just whizzes by. DS

ST. GEORGE, JUDITH *Dear Dr. Bell . . . Your Friend, Helen Keller.* Putnam, 1992 96p illus. with photographs

ISBN 0-399-22337-1 \$15.95

R Gr. 5-8

It's good to have a biography of Helen Keller that links her to someone other than Anne Sullivan. Alexander Graham Bell was already famous as the inventor of the telephone when he met six-year-old Helen, but St. George shows that his interest in helping the deaf communicate was more important to him than his public achievements. It was Bell who suggested to Helen's parents that they obtain a teacher for her from the Perkins Institute; later, Bell would help Helen adjust to an extremely public life. This is a candid portrait of both Keller and Bell, and St. George is particularly revealing of the frustrations each felt with celebrity. Keller, whose interests were wide-ranging, felt straitjacketed in public appearances: "I found myself utterly confined to one subject—myself, and it was not long before I had exhausted it." Bell could empathize: "One would think I had never done anything worthwhile but the telephone." While interest in Keller will probably be what draws most kids to this book, they will find tandem biographies that bring a new context to two legendary subjects. Photos of the principals, along with other

period pictures (including a poster of Keller's hand demonstrating the Manual Alphabet) are placed throughout the graciously designed pages. RS

TAYLOR, C. J., ad. *Little Water and the Gift of the Animals: A Seneca Legend*; ad. and illus. by C. J. Taylor. Tundra, 1992 24p

ISBN 0-88776-285-9 \$13.95

Ad 6-9 yrs

In this adaptation of a Seneca story, Little Water has a special gift of talking with the animals, a gift his tribal elders ask him to employ in their desperate search for a cure for the sickness that has overtaken the village. Little Water goes into the forest, falls, and is injured; while he lies unconscious, the animals come and impart their secrets to his dreaming mind. The animals' gifts don't always seem quite to the point, nor is it clear how Little Water uses the gifts to cure his people. As a cultural myth to explain human dependence on the natural world, the story may have more coherence, but the thematic rightness is not here translated into a totally comprehensible tale. Illustrations, thinly applied paint on canvas, have a literal, Sunday-painter quality that is sometimes awkward and naïve, but the autumn colors are vivid and young viewers will enjoy the woodland atmosphere and the animal helpers. RS

TERBAN, MARTIN *Funny You Should Ask: How to Make Up Jokes and Riddles with Wordplay*; illus. by John O'Brien. Clarion, 1992 64p

Trade ed. ISBN 0-395-60556-3 \$13.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-395-58113-3 \$5.95

R Gr. 3-6

This is a riddle book with a nice little twist: it explains the structure of basic riddles in a way that will allow young jokesters to make up their own material. Terban devotes a chapter to each of four types of jokes: Jokes with Sound-Alike Words (plays on "fowl" and "foul" serve as the primary examples), Jokes with Almost-Sound-Alike words ("peas" and "peace" are a suggested pair), Jokes with Homographs (striking bakers, for instance, needing more dough), and Jokes with Idioms (humor involving acrobats "head over heels" in love). Each chapter has a clear explanation of that particular kind of joke, twenty-five sample riddles, a key to the verbal plays involved in the samples, and suggested words, twists, and punch lines for making up your own (in Almost-Sound-Alike words, for instance, one suggested pairing is "rust/rest" with a possible punch line of "Rust in peace!"). The print is big enough and sufficiently laden with jokes that joke book enthusiasts won't be put off by the expository text, which is lively and understandable. Like Agee's *Go Hang a Salami* (BCCB 10/92), this book will involve kids in language play, and if they just want to read the jokes, there's enough to make it worth their while. The illustrations, line-drawings with a slightly Learian flavor, offer entertainingly literal depictions of surrounding jokes. A note about sources (mainly children and childhood) and a list of more joke books are included. DS

TERRELL, RUTH HARRIS *A Kid's Guide to How To Stop the Violence*; illus. by John Paul Genzo. Preiss/Avon, 1992 138p

Paper ed. ISBN 0-380-76652-3 \$2.99

R Gr. 4-6

This sensible, straightforward discussion tackles violence at different levels: in families, schools, communities, entertainment media, and world politics. Terrell starts out with the point that violence is a real problem, not a television show, and

she gives some background on this country's history of violence, the cycles of abuse that affect individuals, and some suggestions for taking action against violence; addresses of organizations to write to (verbalizing opinions gets a lot of emphasis here) or to telephone for help are listed in the back. The occasional black-and-white photographs are more effective than the rather awkward cartoon drawings; the text is disarmingly formatted with frequent section headings and boxed notices of statistics or specific advice. This is extremely simple without becoming condescending, and it will serve as a basis for classroom or homefront dialogues about a deeply disturbing issue that all kids have to face today. BH

THESMAN, JEAN *I'm Not Telling*; Paper ed. ISBN 0-380-76523-3; *Mirror, Mirror*; Paper ed. ISBN 0-380-76271-4; *Who Am I, Anyway?*; Paper ed. ISBN 0-380-76524-1. Each book: Avon, 1992 Paper ed. \$2.99 124p (The Birthday Girls) M Gr. 4-7

In *The Rain Catchers* (BCCB 3/91), Thesman interweaves the lives of several complicated women, but this mass-market trilogy instead frays the threads of one moderately interesting story. Jill, Ceegee, and Nancy were all born the same day in the same maternity ward. At the age of twelve they meet because Ceegee's mother has hit upon the novel if somewhat unlikely idea of rounding up all the kids who share Ceegee's birthday and birthplace for a party in a local park. Half-a-dozen kids show up with their families, and one mother-daughter team, Maggie and Mrs. Tracey, begins maliciously to push everyone around. They make fun of Ceegee's nose, question Jill about her beloved "ex-convict" Uncle, and throw out dark suspicions that Nancy's mother died during childbirth. It's the fallout from these hurtful remarks that provides the plot for each novel. Ceegee's nasal obsession can't really sustain *Mirror, Mirror*; the fact that Uncle Duffy was thrown in jail for a night for a misunderstanding about some traffic tickets isn't enough impetus for *I'm Not Telling*; while Nancy is angry at her father and "mother" (actually her aunt) for lying about her real mother in *Who Am I Anyway?*, it seems curious that she feels no guilt nor sorrow about her mother's death. The style is okay, the device is appealing, but none of the books tell the story most readers will want to hear: Maggie Tracey's. RS

THOMAS, JOYCE CAROL *When the Nightingale Sings*. HarperCollins, 1992 148p Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020295-5 \$13.89 Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020294-7 \$14.00 M Gr. 4-6

This African-American Cinderella story is set in a Southern swamp and is focused on an orphan who is rightful heir to the role of Queen Mother Rhythm in a gospel choir. She's been raised with two mean stepsisters and mistreated by her aunt, "Cousin Ruby," who had a falling out with her own two sisters when Marigold's mother ran off with Ruby's husband long ago. This realistic plot seems unnecessarily to complicate the fairy tale tone of the book, and the ensuing contrivance overshadows some truly imaginative writing. Lyrical names and passages become overwritten or are brought up short by clichés ("Good gracious alive! That's no log, that's a crocodile") and by unlikely coincidences crowded in quick succession ("Quicksand!" she gasped"), including a sudden hurricane that uproots an old coffer of important letters. Balancing this problem and some information-laden dialogue is a dynamic Sunday morning sermon at the Great Gospel Convention, a vivid sense of setting, and a mild love story between a music director searching for the "new Nightingale" and the heroine who sings her way out of misery. BH

THOMAS, ELIZABETH *Green Beans*; illus. by Vicki Jo Redenbaugh. Carolrhoda, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-87614-708-2 \$13.95 R 4-7 yrs

"Don't just snatch some grapes willy-nilly like that," Gramma says. "Use the grape snips." Strict and rather demanding, Gramma generates a certain amount of friction with young narrator Dorothea, which is just what makes this picture book a welcome relief from the nostalgia so often cast over such picture book relationships. Gramma's beans, however, refuse to obey her; it's not till a higher power, in the form of a week's rain falling in her absence, asserts itself that they're willing to grow into the "whippersnappers" Gramma loves. This transformation softens Gramma and eases Dorothea into a new understanding of her, though Gramma remains starchy to the end: "That's quite enough. . . . You are not a starving barbarian. You will leave the pattern on the plate, please." The color-pencil illustrations that enact this minidrama also have a starchy quality in the characters' postures and expressions. The horizontal compositions are spiked with vertical lines that insinuate exactly the same low-key tension implied by the text. It's a felicitous first book for both author and artist. BH

TURNER, ROBYN MONTANA *Mary Cassatt*. Little, 1992 32p illus. with photographs (Portraits of Women Artists for Children)
ISBN 0-316-85650-9 \$15.95 R Gr. 4-6

This latest entry in a visually appealing series (*Georgia O'Keeffe*, BCCB 12/91, and *Rosa Bonheur*, 1/92) chronicles the life and considerable achievements of Mary Cassatt. Turner begins with a brief historical note about the difficulty of pursuing an artistic career for a nineteenth-century woman, then proceeds chronologically through Cassatt's career. She discusses her subject both biographically and artistically, mentioning the artist's perseverance in the face of rejection for her sex and for her pioneering impressionistic style (some mention should have been made, however, of the part Cassatt's wealth played in getting around difficulties). Brief and understandable analyses of individual paintings are also included. The book is filled with color reproductions of Cassatt's work, which are well-chosen to reflect changes in her style and interests and to represent some of her best known paintings, such as *The Bath*. The open and spacious format, interesting subject, and simple language in easy-to-read print make this an attractive read as well as a useful resource. DS

TYRRELL, ESTHER QUESADA *Hummingbirds: Jewels in the Sky*; illus. with photographs by Robert A. Tyrrell. Crown, 1992 36p
Library ed. ISBN 0-517-58391-7 \$14.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-517-58390-9 \$14.00 R Gr. 3-6

The jewel metaphor in the subtitle may seem overly poetic, but this book's lavish photographs of these tiny birds do indeed show them shimmering like a gallery of gems. Tyrrell covers habitat, plumage, aviation skill (hummingbirds can, unlike other birds, fly backwards and upside down), feeding habits, and breeding patterns, in addition to describing their history and the twelve species currently found in the U.S. The text, in big print on large square pages, is accessible, interesting, and easy to read. The main draw here, however, is the photography—the Tyrrells, who are hummingbird experts, present a sensational series of images, such as the title page shot of a cerise-capped creature holding a penny nearly as big as its own

body. Many photographs (of eggs and nests as well as birds) emphasize the scale of these tiny flyers along with their festive coloration and propensity for feeding on dramatically crimson flowers; all photos are taken at high enough speed for crystal stop-action clarity of those rapidly beating wings. The book conveys the charm of its subject well enough that it might get readers—or classes—to the local aviary. A note on how to attract hummingbirds, an illustrated double-page guide to hummingbirds in this country, and an index are included. DS

WALSH, JILL PATON *When Grandma Came*; illus. by Sophy Williams. Viking, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-670-83581-1 \$13.00 Ad 4-7 yrs

When this peripatetic Grandma comes around, she announces her presence with an extravagant comparison to say how happy she is to see her granddaughter: "I have been to Mount Desert Island, far away, and seen the shape of a great whale rolling in the deep . . . but I have never, no never, seen anything as tremendous as you!" Each return visit brings another flattering comparison ("Never, no never") and finds the granddaughter a little older; by the end, the girl is able to respond "I love you too, Grandma." Sweet, soft, gently rounded pastel paintings illustrate this soothing litany, which would make a perfect bedtime story . . . for Grandma. Kids, though, may find the story repetitive and the mood a little *too* cozy. RS

WESTWOOD, CHRIS *Shock Waves*. Clarion, 1992 180p
ISBN 0-395-63111-4 \$13.95 Ad Gr. 7-10

Seventeen-year-old Leigh Taylor is an art student at a small college in Britain, and she's troubled by the mysterious recent deaths of two fellow students, one of them a dear friend. Leigh's grief over Joan's death, however, is tempered by her blossoming love for boyfriend Stephen, but it soon appears that it is Stephen himself who is the killer, somehow sucking the life force out of the women he loves. Leigh is only saved when Stephen's previous victims (whose bodies have disappeared) combine forces and rise from the sea to take their revenge. It's unfortunately not clear exactly what Stephen is or how he performs his incubus-like maneuver (there's little attempt to explore, à la Klaus' *The Silver Kiss*, the sexual aspect of the equation), and the cumulative final vengeance of Stephen's past loves is sudden and confusing. Stephen, however, is an appealingly unwilling killer ("Do you know how it feels to destroy all you touch, and to loathe what you are, knowing there's no end to it?"), and the book is nicely creepy and familiar, with loyal sleuthing friends, ghoulish corpses, and convincing red herrings; fans of milder supernatural horror will find it a pleasantly spooky read. DS

WEXLER, JEROME *Pet Hamsters*; written and illus. by Jerome Wexler. Whitman, 1992 48p
ISBN 0-8075-6525-3 \$14.95 R Gr. 3-6

Wexler, author of *Pet Mice* (BCCB 5/89) and *Pet Gerbils* (BCCB 11/90), has four important characteristics: an in-depth personal knowledge of his subject, an ability to write, talent with a camera, and an understanding of his young audience. Now he brings these gifts to bear on hamsters, which are actually a more popular American pet than the stars of his previous books. He deals with acquisition, feeding, hygiene, breeding, and hamster-pup development, with an addendum

about photographing your pets; the information is punctuated by lively personal anecdotes ("She wasn't eating the pups after all! She was placing them in her cheek pouches so she could move them") and a sense of pragmatism born of experience ("Never reach in with your bare hands to separate fighting hamsters!"). Attractive photos of whiskery, bright-eyed hamsters stuffing their cheek pouches to an amazing degree and just generally enjoying the world may even lure rodent-resistant parents (but better flip past those closeups of huge incisors). Kids yearning for fuzzy pets will appreciate the advice and interest offered here by an adult who not only knows the subject but also shares their enthusiasm. DS

WILDE, NICHOLAS *Down Came a Blackbird*. Holt, 1992 182p
ISBN 0-8050-2001-2 \$15.95 Ad Gr. 6-9

James is a bitter and angry boy, packed off to a distant great uncle by his probation officer because his alcoholic mother has been hospitalized. He doesn't like his dry old great-uncle and he doesn't like the eager-to-please housekeeper, but his interest is aroused by the old house and the dreams he begins to have about its inhabitants. In these dreams he is the young son of the house's owner, a bitter and unloving man, and he finds his only pleasure in friendship with a local boy who works on the grounds, until eventually tragedy strikes. James' realization that these are his great-uncle's dreams of his own childhood provides him with an understanding about his great-uncle and himself that allows him to begin to connect with the old man. While James' fury is forthrightly drawn (he torments animals and steals), the rest of the story is less successful: the dreams, so similar to (but less successful than) those in Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden*, are overelaborate and slow the novel's pace, while it's clear to the reader, for far too long a time, who the people in the dreams are in James' waking life. Readers unfazed by the loose construction of the fantasy element may still find satisfaction in this story of a boy learning to try again despite the harshness of his life. DS

WOLFF, FERIDA *The Woodcutter's Coat*; illus. by Anne Wilsdorf. Joy Street, 1992 32p
ISBN 0-316-95048-3 \$15.95 R 4-6 yrs

In a chain reaction common to folklore, Wolff's original story features a woodcutter's warm coat that is first stolen and then passed from one person to the other until the woodcutter finds it at the tailor's (mended beyond recognition) and, all unknowing, swaps a load of wood for it. The story will fit well into read-aloud sessions because of its stylistic economy and satisfying circularity. The watercolor illustrations, though they stand up to group inspection because of their dashing composition, yield a lot more funny details up close, especially in the mini-tales of animal and human behavior transpiring as the coat gets passed around. This artist thrives on surprises—a formally attired little girl wheeling a lobster in her doll buggy, a bald man waiting in the barber shop to have his one hair trimmed, a dog stealing a child's doll while a cat takes the dog's bone, a postman with a bird on his hat (airmail!)—there's rampant mischief in every spread, but none of it seems crowded or crowds out the story. Something of Allan and Janet Ahlberg's slyness shows up here, in a picture book that's both witty and child-appelling. BH

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

Reading for Parents, Teachers, and Librarians

Popular Reading for Children III, edited by Sally Estes, is a compilation of annotated bibliographies, originally appearing in *Booklist* magazine, of books with special appeal for children. Some of the topics include "Just Good Reads," "After Henry Huggins," "Growing Up Funny," and "After Sweet Valley"; an author/title index is included. (American Library Association; 64p.; paper ed. ISBN 0-8389-7599-2; \$4.95.) RS

The American Library Association has also issued a new compendium of media choices for children, *Best of the Best for Children*, edited by Denise Perry Donavin and published by Random House. The loose organization and scattershot cross-referencing will probably drive most librarians a little nuts, but parents (the obviously intended audience for the book) will appreciate the friendly informality of the format and the clear annotations. Books, magazines, videos, audiocassettes, software, toys, and travel destinations (the last seems a peculiar addendum) are all included, and "connection" notes link the differing media in welcome ways. Each section includes adult resources and directories where applicable, and there's an author/title index. (366p., paper ed. ISBN 0-679-74250-6, \$20.00.) RS

The Zena Sutherland Lectures 1983-1992, edited by Betsy Hearne and published by Clarion Books, is a compilation of ten lectures given in honor of Zena Sutherland, Professor Emeritus of the University of Chicago and former Editor of *The Bulletin*. Lecturers include Maurice Sendak, Lloyd Alexander, Katherine Paterson, Virginia Hamilton, Robert Cormier, Paula Fox, David Macaulay, Jean Fritz, Trina Schart Hyman, and Betsy Byars; Hearne contributes an introduction to each. (224p.; trade ed. ISBN 0-395-64504-2, \$18.95; paper ed. ISBN 0-395-64987-0, \$9.95.) All proceeds from the book will go to the Zena Sutherland Lectureship Fund. The next Sutherland Lecture will take place on May 7, 1993 at the Harold Washington Library in Chicago, where the lecturer will be Walter Dean Myers. RS

Advance orders are now being taken for the proceedings of the 34th annual Allerton Institute, *Evaluating Children's Books: A Critical Look*, sponsored by the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science. The proceedings, edited by Betsy Hearne and Roger Sutton, feature papers on many topics in book evaluation, including reviewing nonfiction and multicultural materials; the impact of reviewing on publishing; evaluating books from Latino cultures; the use of book reviews in public and school libraries; and the evaluation of illustrative and design elements in picture books. Also included is a roundtable discussion among the children's book review editors of *Booklist*, *The Bulletin*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *School Library Journal*. The paperbound proceedings will sell for \$18.50 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling; reserve a copy by contacting the University of Illinois, GSLIS Publications Office, 249 Armory Bldg., 505 E. Armory St., Champaign, Il. 61820, or call toll-free 1-800-982-0914.

SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this new index, which will appear in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In no way meant to be a cataloging aid, this rather idiosyncratic index is instead intended to lead readers to those books that could fill a particular gap in a collection, to help teachers and librarians find books that might be useful in various school or recreational settings, and to help in those requests for a "love story" or a "scary story." In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

African-Americans: Marzollo
 African-Americans-fiction:
 Goldberg; Paulsen; Prather; Thomas, J.
 African-Americans-poetry:
 Livingston
 African-Americans-stories: Chocolate
 Africa-history: Halliburton
 ALPHABET BOOKS: Gabler;
 Micklethwait
 Animals-fables: Kherdian
 Animals-poetry: Mado
 Art appreciation: Micklethwait
 Art history: Turner
 Australia-fiction: Sheppard
 BEDTIME STORIES: Linden;
 London; Walsh
 BIOGRAPHIES: Livingston;
 Marzollo; St. George; Turner
 Birds: Boice; Tyrrell
 Bookmaking: Fennimore
 Books and reading-fiction: Paulsen
 California-fiction: Singer
 Caribbean Islands-stories: Linden
 Cats-fiction: Schwartz
 Circuses: Spier
 Civil War-fiction: Forman
 Clothing-stories: Wolff
 COUNTING BOOKS: Geisert;
 Linden
 Deer-fiction: Monson
 Disabilities: Alexander; St. George
 Disabilities-fiction: Helfman
 Dogs: Alexander

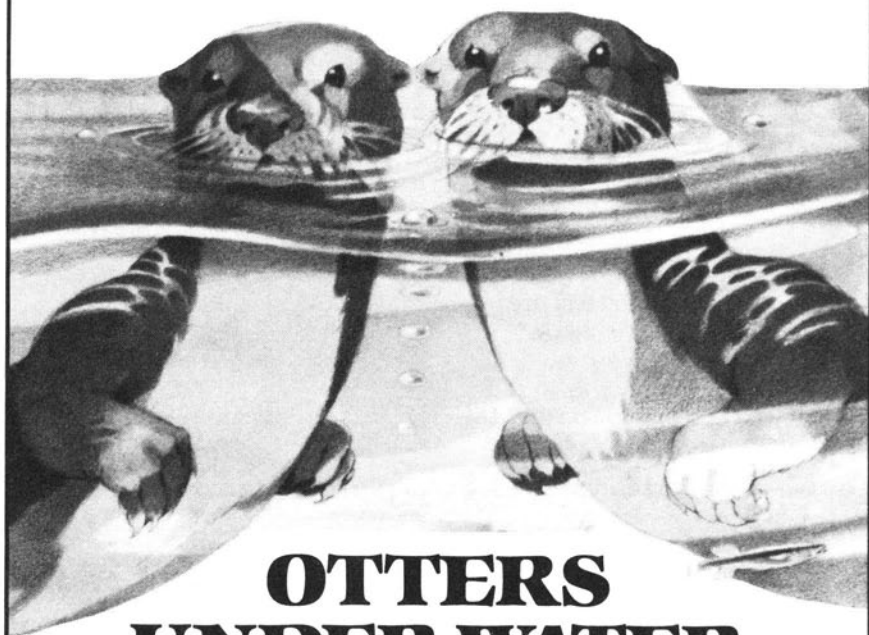
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 Dragons-stories: Conover
 Dreams-fiction: Wilde
 Dreams-stories: Arnold
 Ecology: Lasky
 EVERYDAY LIFE STORIES:
 Hiser; Sachar
 Fables: Juster; Kherdian
 Family life: Rosenberg
 Family reading: Moore
 FANTASY: Doyle; Ende; Goldberg;
 Kisling; Levin; Pierce; Sheppard;
 Singer; Wilde
 Fathers and daughters-fiction:
 Caseley
 Fathers and sons-fiction: Auch; Haas
 Florida-fiction: Prather
 FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES:
 Conover; Sierra; Taylor
 Food and eating: Patent
 Food and eating-stories: Thomas, E.
 Friends-fiction: Clarke; Savin
 Frogs-stories: Arnold
 FUNNY STORIES: Clarke;
 Rosenthal; Sachar
 GAME BOOKS: Micklethwait
 Geography: Rosenthal
 Geology: Lasky
 Grandparents-stories: Walsh; Thomas, E.
 Growing up-fiction: Caseley; Hall;
 McKenna
 Growing up-poetry: Hopkins
 Guidance: Rosenberg; Terrell
 Hamsters: Wexler

Handicrafts: Fennimore
Health: Patent
HISTORICAL FICTION: Forman;
 Green; Ingoglia; Marko; Paulsen;
 Savin
History, African: Halliburton
History, U. S.: Ingoglia; Paulsen;
 Marko; Savin; St. George
Holidays: Chocolate
Horses: McGregor
Hunting-fiction: Monson
Illness-fiction: Haas
Immigrants-stories: Bresnick-Perry
Japanese-Americans-fiction: Savin
Japan-poetry: Mado
Kentucky-fiction: Green
Knights and chivalry-fiction:
 Cervantes; Doyle
Kwanzaa-stories: Chocolate
Language arts: Cooper; Fennimore;
 St. George; Terban
LOVE STORIES: Caseley; Kaplow;
 McKenna
Mental illness-fiction: Caseley
Middle Ages-fiction: Kisling
Monsters-stories: Gabler
Music and musicians-fiction: Thomas, J.
Music and musicians-stories: Davol
Mythology, Greek-fiction: Alcock
Native Americans-fiction: Ingoglia
Native Americans-folklore: Taylor
Nature study: Boice; Tyrrell
New York City-fiction: Goldberg
Nose-picking-fiction: Sachar
Nutrition: Patent
Pet care: Wexler
Pigs-stories: Geisert
POETRY: Hopkins; Livingston;
 Mado; Merriam; Moore

Reading aloud: Alcock
Reading, easy: Hiser; Sachar;
 Schwartz
Reading, reluctant: Rosenthal;
 Terban
Rural life: McGregor
Rural life-fiction: Green; McKenna;
 Monson
SCARY STORIES: Westwood
SCHOOL STORIES: Sachar
Sisters-fiction: Hiser
Skiing-fiction: MacLean
Slavery-fiction: Paulsen
Social issues: Terrell
Spain-fiction: Cervantes
SPORTS STORIES: MacLean
Stepfamilies-fiction: Auch
Story hour: Davol; Gabler; Geisert;
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 Marzollo; Sierra; Spier; Thomas,
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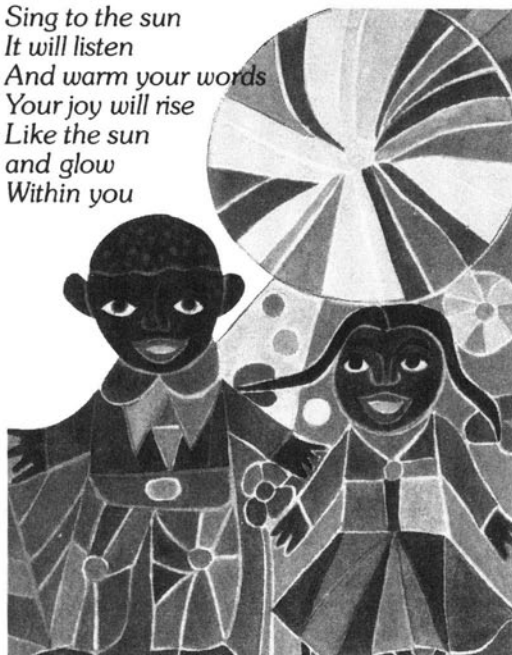
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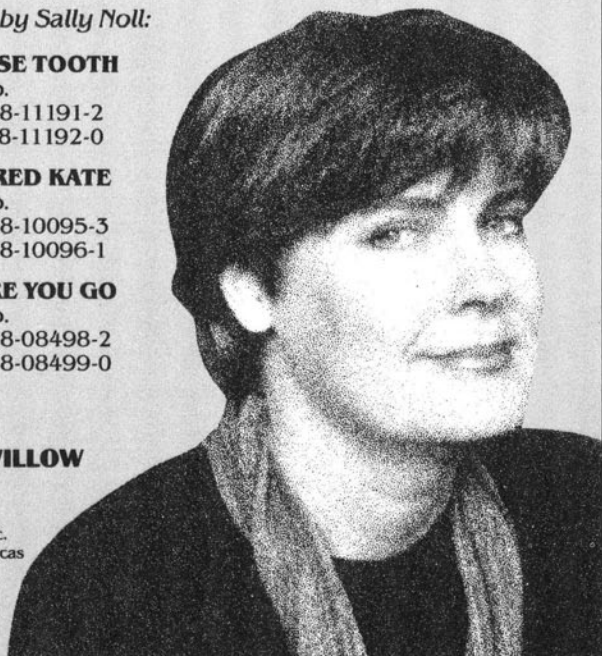
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